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NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF
NIGERIA

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**21ST CENTURY MARKETING USING COMMUNICATION MODES BY STUDENTS IN
ACCESSING THEIR INFORMATION NEEDS AT TWO SELECTED STUDY CENTRE
LIBRARIES IN SOUTHWEST OF NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

This paper examined marketing in the 21st century using communication modes in accessing information needs of students in two study centre libraries of National Open University of Nigeria. A descriptive research design was used for this study and the instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, observation and interview. A total of 60 copies of the questionnaire were administered to students, from faculties of Agricultural Sc., Management Sc., Social Sc., Health Sc., Law, Education, Science & Technology, but 56 were retrieved and used for the analysis. Purposeful and stratified random sampling technique was used for this research. Findings from the demographic data show more male than female students between the age brackets of 21-25 years, with higher percentage than other ages. Result from findings shows that faculty of social science has greater percentage of students than other faculties and higher undergraduates than post graduate students. Data analysis show awareness on student use of library resources before and after marketing as medium, while social media, the use of course materials and past question papers were discovered to have greater impact at student in accessing their information needs. Lack of internet connectivity was a major hindrance by students in accessing available electronic resources at both study center libraries. University management must ensure unlimited internet connectivity in all study centers.

Keywords: Marketing, Library services, Communication modes, Library resources, Information needs, NOUN, and Students.

Words: 216

Introduction

With the advent of information technology in libraries, marketing of available resources is very essential because students access information from any location in the world with the help of computer or any mobile device via the internet. Thus as a result of this new development in accessing information, the library has experienced drastic changes in rendering her services to effectively satisfy the various information needs of her users and as such, academic library that wants to remain relevant must take its resources to users. In taking library resources to users, librarians must know the needs of her users, by discerning what, when and how information should be disseminated Alemna (2001).

According to Pradhan (2014) for librarians to effectively promote library resources, these four elements of marketing must be put into consideration; the (4P's) which are product, price, promotion and place. Communication is very crucial, because without it, service cannot be rendered to users. The duty of librarians is evolved around the customer hence the need to satisfy them over and again, this is done by replacing the initial 4p's with 4c's i.e. (Customer, Cost, Convenience and Communication). However this introduces an entirely new idea called Product Service Value Marketing Mix Matrix as noted Jamaludin et al (2015) where service marketing, element of marketing and interaction are interwoven in accomplishing the goal of the library. Students should be able render suggestions to library management on type of information they need, the format desired and forum for feedback as noted by Honhon (2013).

In view of Jestin & Parameswari (2002), marketing in the library requires planning, anticipating user's needs and devising ways of providing service to users through diverse ways of communication and maintaining good relationship with users. Marketing in the 21st century enable students develop positive opinion about the library, librarians and the entire library resources. The type of information required by students and their location, determines the mode library resources will be communicated to them using platforms like email, instant message, whatsapp, NOUN i-learn, NOUN twitter through computer devices like laptops, tablet, or any smart mobile phone.

National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) library is an academic resource center that has the facility print and electric resources to satisfy her immediate community. NOUN is an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution in Nigeria that is licensed by National University Commission (NUC) to operate a single mode of Learning, with a large network of institutions all over Nigeria called 'study centers', these study centers are spread across almost all states and the geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Information Communication Technology have drastically improved marketing of library services. The use of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) librarian's duties have been easier, faster, accurate and less stressful, the ease of accomplishing task have enhanced librarians performance in generating, processing, storing, retrieving and disseminating information to diverse users and in different formats via different communication modes. With the aid of marketing students can easily access, locate, and identify their information needs. This thought is in line with Ranganathan laws of library science which states that "library is for use, saves the time of users, every book its user, every user its book, and the library is a growing organism". However, regardless of marketing using communication modes by students in accessing their information needs in this two study centers, how effective has marketing in the 21st century enhanced students use of library resources.

Objectives of Study

The main objective of this research is to:

1. To investigate the rate of digital marketing in study center of students.
2. To find out the type of communication modes available at students study center.
3. To find out the type of information needs available to students in their centers.
4. To find out the library resources which regularly satisfy student information needs in their study centers.
5. To investigate the major challenges NOUN students encounter in accessing their information needs in their study centers.

Research Questions

To achieve the identified objectives, these research questions were raised:

1. How do students rate marketing of library resources in their study center?
2. What type of communication modes is available at students study center?
3. What type of information needs is available to students in their centers?
4. Which library resources regularly satisfy student information needs in their centers?
5. What major challenges do NOUN students encounter in accessing their information needs in the centers?

Significance of Study

The world has become a global village, however NOUN students are expected to have unlimited access to the digital world for easy interaction amongst students due of their unique learning style. i.e. ‘learning without wall’ unlike their colleagues in conventional universities that must in present in class for lectures, assignments and class attendance. Marketing in the 21st century is vital to students because with the knowledge of ICT students are well-informed on how to access information by creating, sharing and exchanging information effortlessly from platforms like NOUN i-learn, NOUN twitter, what Sapp, email, instant message via laptops, tablet, or any smart mobile device for their various information needs.

Literature Review

Library is the core intellectual system of every university where formal and informal learning is developed. It is a medium of interaction of cognitive ideas between the living and the dead through frequent reading of book from prominent authors both past and present. Library is a non-profit organization but to effectively meet the needs of users due to ever declining funds from University management, librarians are required to source for funds internally through reprographic service like “photocopying, printing, typing, scanning of documents” and externally from the local community, “like friends of the library etc.” for adequate maintenance and daily upkeep for subscription of periodicals and online databases and other routine activities in the library as suggested by (Nwosu 2010, and Patange, 2013).

Marketing as opined by Dhiman (2009) is a medium whereby librarians can increase library patronage by improving library revenue thus making resources available to students and

educating them. Marketing in the 21st century library materials changes student's perception and it's a constant reminder of the library in their mind as observed by Martey, (2000) and Pradhan, (2014), there according to Edoka, (2000), and Sass (2002), librarians must safeguard library resources by ensuring that taking daily statistics is taken to identify the number of users, the class and for effective planning. Marketing of library and information services in this digital era brings about flexibility in services such that information students can study and work simultaneously, bearing in mind the uniqueness of users' needs, developing user skills in accessing their various information needs irrespective of place and time because the world has become a global village as observed by Gupta and Jambhekar (2002).

Academic librarians cater for a large number of patrons and as such, they should make adequate preparation to meet the needs of undergraduates, postgraduates, faculty, researches etc, because the aim of marketing generally is to ensure high patronage of users to the library, by ensuring that users information needs are adequately catered for at the right place and time (Gupta, 2006 and Odine, 2011). In order to easy accomplish this huge task, information professionals need to be competent in marketing and this is key to rapid development in most striving university library in the 21st century as posited by Chandra, (2011).

Marketing library and information products and services enhances the visibility of librarians and convey awareness of library resources via different communication modes like, writing of vital library information on posters, library exhibitions, the display of new arrivals and orientation exercise for new students and access to electronic information as noted by Odine, 2011. Communication is the quickest medium of interaction. NOUN as an ODL operates system of learning where students are separated by time and space but use technological medium such as NOUN Website, Students Portal, Students email, Instant Message (SMS) via Smart Mobile Phone, Whatsapp Message, Radio Message and NOUN i-learn (Satellite broadcast, interactive TV, CD ROM, Audio/Video, Counselling, Online- facilitation), for interaction between students and their facilitators or fellow students with the help of an online support system called NOUN i-learn whereby real time chat, e-counselling, email and discussion groups with staff and students for easy interaction.

Research from scholars like Ifijeh (2011) discovered that some Nigerian University libraries are impeded by poor funding, poor infrastructure, and low morale among librarians, lack of quality of library services and lack of business expertise by librarian. Therefore, 21st century marketing

must be seen as an essential service of rendering value to immediate community in form of Corporate Social Responsibility, by developing relationship between students, the library and other stakeholders where donation like books, furniture, computers and other items are given to the library Leiser (2004) Igbeka (2008).

Research Methodology

A Descriptive Research method was adopted for this study, this was achieved by gathering data on types of services rendered via marketing in the 21st century using communication modes in accessing student’s information needs in selected study center libraries. Questionnaire and interview were the main instrument used to collect data. Population of this study was sixty students from Abeokuta in (Ogun state) and McCarthy in (Lagos state) study center libraries in South West Nigeria, but 56 were retrieved and used for this analysis. There was a high rate from respondents due to the fact that questionnaire was collected immediately after completion by the researcher.

This study utilised purposeful sampling and stratified random sampling method. The first sampling was administered on newly admitted students between the ‘busy period’ between the hours of 10am-12am, but for returning students who desire to consult the academic registry, counsellors office, cybercafé, ICT, store for collection of their course materials and the library for one reason or the other. The second sampling was repeated few hours later between 1pm-3pm the same day for a period of one week. The sampling was done randomly so that each student had equal chance of being selected from each of the following faculties (Education, Science & Technology, Agriculture, Social Science, Law, Management Science and Health Science).

Table 1: Demography of Respondents

Variation	Frequency	Percent %
Gender		
Male	32	57.1
Female	24	42.9
Total	56	100
Age		
17-20	15	26.7
21-25	26	46.3
26-30	9	16.0

31-35	3	5.3
36-40	1	1.7
41-45	1	1.7
46 and above	1	1.7
Total	56	100
Status of Student		
Undergraduate	50	89.3
Post Graduate	6	10.7
Total	56	100
Faculty of Students		
Agriculture Science	2	3.6
Law	4	7.1
Management Science	13	23.2
Social Science	22	39.3
Science and Technology	8	14.3
Health Science	1	1.8
Education	6	10.7
Total	56	100

Table 1 shows the analysis of respondent's gender, age, status and faculty of students. From the analysis on gender, 57.1% of male students responded more than their female colleagues with 42.9%, also from the analysis the highest age bracket falls between 21-25 years with 46.3%. Data on educational status of students show that undergraduate students have the highest percent with 89.3% more than post graduate students with 10.7%. Students from faculty of Social Science have the highest number with 39.3%.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to study centers

Institutions	Frequency Distributed	Percent % Distributed	Frequency Retrieved	Percent % Retrieved
Abeokuta	40	66.7	40	71.4
McCarthy	20	33.3	16	28.6
Total	60	100	56	100

Table 2 represent completed and returned questionnaires from study centers. A total of sixty questionnaires were distributed but 56 was returned representing 93.3% that used for this analysis.

Table 3: 21st century marketing of library resources in study centers

Variation	High	Medium	Low	Total
Level of awareness of students in the use of library resources	13	28	15	56
Students satisfaction after marketing library resources	19	32	05	56
Total	32	60	20	112

Table 3 shows the level of student's awareness in the use of library resources by study center as medium; while student's level of satisfaction after effective marketing of library resources is high.

Table 4: Type of Communication modes in study centers

Variation	Frequency	Percent %
Most suitable Communication Mode by students		
NOUN Library Website	4	7.1
Students Orientation	9	16.0
SMS via Mobile Phone	9	16.0
Social Media (Whatsapp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Yahoo mail)	15	26.8
Poster/Library Leaflets	7	12.5
Center Workshop	2	3.6
Notice Board	7	12.5
Library Resources (Books, Journals, CD ROM database)	3	5.4
Total	56	100
Most preferred communication mode by students		
Library Website	12	21.4
Social Media	32	57.1
Notice Board	7	12.5

Newsletter	-	-
Poster/leaflet	5	8.9
Total	56	100

Table 4 shows social media as the most suitable and most preferred mode of communication in marketing library resources with the highest mode.

Table 5: Type of information needs available to student in study centers

Variation	Frequency	Percent %
Library resources frequently accessed by students		
Library resources (print/electronic)	14	25
Reserve books	4	7.1
Online databases	6	10.7
Course material (print/electronic)	12	21.4
Newspaper/magazine	4	7.1
NOUN newsletter	1	1.8
Students project	3	5.4
Past question paper (print/electronic)	12	21.4
CD ROM of books/projects	-	-
Total	56	100
Challenges students encounter in accessing their information needs		
Inadequate power supply	9	16.1
Lack of current resources	6	10.7
Lack of information on library use	6	10.7
Lack of steady internet connectivity	15	26.8
Lack of resources in students discipline	6	10.7
Lack of adequate course material	9	16.1
Lack of past question papers	2	3.6
Lack of adequate lighting in the library	3	5.4
Total	56	100
Library resources which mostly satisfy		

students information needs		
Books/Journals	4	7.1
Online databases	4	7.1
Past question paper	22	39.3
Course material	17	30.4
Newspaper/magazine	3	5.4
NOUN newsletter	5	8.9
Library catalogue	1	1.8
Total	56	100
How librarians effectively satisfy students information needs		
Listen attentively to queries	13	23.2
Prompt response to students request	21	37.5
Information given in desired format	15	26.8
Selective dissemination of information (SDI)	3	5.4
Referral Services	4	7.1
Total	56	100

From table 5, the library materials mostly accessed by students are course materials and past question papers both (print/electronic). Data shows that lack of internet is one of the major hindrance student's encounter while accessing information needs in the library. This points to the fact that librarians can effectively satisfy student's information needs by attending promptly to students request by making library resources available in desired format using communication modes as illustrated in the above table.

Conclusion

It was observed that social media was one of the most effective and preferred mode of communication by students within the ages of 21-25 years at marketing library and information services using communication modes by NOUN students. Result from analysis shows that there were more undergraduate than post graduate students in NOUN and the highest percentage of student was from the faculty of social science. Results from data illustrates that students prefer prompt response of their request from librarian in dissemination of information.

Recommendations

National Open University of Nigeria is an Open and Distance Learning institution and is mandatory for all study center libraries to have unlimited access to internet connection which will enhance students information needs in learning and research purpose. Librarians are expected to render prompt service to students for their information needs.

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